

THE WINDOW

Windsor Heights Lutheran Church ~ 1240 66th St. Windsor Heights, IA 50324

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A Message from the President



Folks, I am about to let you in on a secret. I am a nerd. A real estate nerd. My work as an attorney focuses on buying and selling homes, and I love it because of the stories that are told in the pages of abstracts, and the signatures on mortgage documents. They tell about the generations who have found use and livelihood on land, and love in homes. They tell about years of saving to buy a first home, joyful growth of families seeking more bedrooms and larger yards, and memories of those who are leaving halls that children and spouses used to fill. Every mortgage has a story.

Our mortgage has a story too. It's a story of determination. It's a story of a congregation who will not be deterred from opening new doors to their community, and who are focused on doing it in a fiscally responsible way. Over nine years of capital campaigns, we have retired over \$1,236,493.46 of debt from our mortgage. I also don't think I was the only one who was surprised and overwhelmed with gratitude for the bequest of James and Evelyn Crabtree, which retired over \$650,000 from our balance. Now our mortgage balance is under one million dollars (it is \$929,874.54 to be precise), and we have three years of payments banked in our building fund for future payments. I'm thankful to count our focus, determination, and progress among the many circumstances of 2021 no one would have foreseen a decade ago.

The end of our mortgage story is in sight, and the determination of every single person in our congregation is to thank. But after considering the current economic climate, the Congregation Council has elected not to launch into another three-year capital campaign to pay off our mortgage completely. While we don't want to give up on retiring our debt, we don't feel that it's the time to ask for more than anyone's resources may be able to give - especially as 2021 has taught us that no one can predict what the future may bring.

A few weeks ago, I asked you to hang in there, and maintain your offerings at their current level if you were able. I'd like to ask the same of your contributions to our capital fund, if you are able to continue to support the monthly or yearly pledge that you made three years ago. Every cent from every member counts towards guiding our mortgage's story towards a happy ending.

I wish you and your families a peaceful and joyous Advent, a merry Christmas, and a happy start to 2022.

Halley Ryherd, WHLC Congregational President





Christmas Gift Drop-Off for Luther Park

Saturday, December 4 from 1-3 p.m.

Sunday, December 5 from 1-3 p.m.

A CHAOSTic Christmastime

Sunday, December 5 from 6 - 8 p.m. in the Youth Room

Lessons & Carols

Saturday, December 11 at 5:30 p.m. Worship Service

Sunday, December 12 at 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Worship Services

Sing-along with Windsor Brass

Sunday, December 12 at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary
(This will also be live-streamed)

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 19 at 9:45 a.m. in the sanctuary

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Friday, December 24

4 p.m. - Worship for all with a children's focus

7 p.m. - Candlelight Service

10 p.m. - Candlelight Service

Christmas Day Worship Service

Saturday, December 25

10 a.m.

(No Saturday night worship)



TREASURER'S REPORT

Below is a brief summary of the results for the General Fund followed by Special Offerings:

	October, 2021		Year-to-Date		2020 Y-T-D
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
General Offering	28,972	41,925	391,355	419,250	396,537
Other General Fund Income	835	532	5,997	5,320	14,667
General Fund Income	29,807	42,457	397,352	424,570	411,204
General Fund Expense	41,010	42,425	400,695	424,250	414,289
General Fund Net Income	(11,203)	32	(3,343)	320	(3,085)
Special Offering Income	209	-	5,790	-	7,490
Special Offering Expense	170	-	3,660	-	7,128
Special Offering Net Income	39	-	2,130	-	362
Total Net Income	(11,164)	32	(1,213)	320	(2,723)
Mortgage Balance			935,340.31		
Capital Appeal Permanent Fund Balance			264,237.59		

October General Offerings were disappointing for a second month and were \$12,953 under budget and are \$27,895 under year-to-date budget. 2021 Year-to-date General Offerings are \$5,182 less than 2020 Year-to-date General Offerings. This is the second month since the beginning of the pandemic that General Offerings have been below budget and trailing prior year General Offerings. Despite these circumstances WHLC remains on solid financial footing with working capital sufficient to meet our obligations. November and December are often strong months for General Offerings. Hopefully giving and thankful hearts provide a strong finish for 2021.

Based upon 2018-2020 giving patterns General Fund Income should have been around \$409,298 versus actual General Fund Income of \$397,352 resulting in a negative variance of \$11,946 or only 97.1% of expected.

October 2021 General Fund Expenses were \$1,415 under budget and Year-to-Date General Fund Expenses are \$23,555 under budget. A portion of the expense variance is from timing differences for property insurance premiums and NON-ELCA benevolence disbursements which are paid quarterly. October expenses also include budgeted annual expenses for website hosting, back flow and grease trap inspections and payroll administration and quarterly expenses for the security system. Snow Removal expenses are \$5,159 over Year-to-Date budget due to large snow falls early in the year and will be \$4,200 over budget at year end. Accounts under budget, e.g., Cleaning Equipment & Supplies, Repairs & Maintenance, Utilities, Employee Benefits (Continuing Education, Mileage Reimbursements and Meetings & Conferences), Parish Education (Wednesday Night Meals and Sunday School and Books & Resources) and other smaller variances from activities which have seen minimal activity due to the pandemic. Expenses are managed within budget, the impact of the pandemic and balanced with General Offerings.

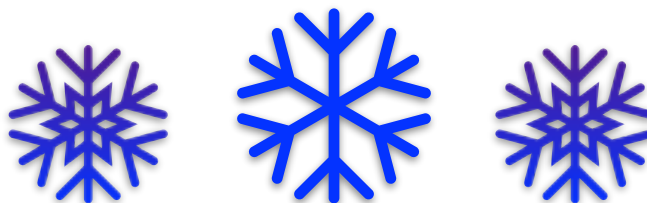
The net result is a General Fund loss of \$11,203 for October and a year-to-date net loss of \$3,343.

A Certificate of Deposit matured on October 16, 2021, and was renewed for 10 months at a rate of 0.40%

Detailed financial statements are available in the church office.

Thank you for your generous offerings.

Duane Danielson, Treasurer



The Season of Beauty

ZACH MEYER

Merry Christmas WHLC! I hope this season finds you well, and filled with many blessings. It's becoming a tradition every Advent to break out my annual Holiday reflections, each year focusing on a different aspect of the season. In years past, I focused on themes typically associated with Advent: Joy, Emmanuel and Peace. This year however, the theme is a bit unusual, and it focuses on one word: Beauty.

If you think about it, beauty is a word that captures this season perfectly! We find beauty in the ornaments adorning trees, and the decorations on folk's homes. We find beauty in sharing longstanding family traditions with the younger generations, and singing joyful carols to neighbors. We find beauty in the cold snowy fields, and that bright shining star in the sky. And most of all, we find beauty in that tiny wee infant, bundled up in a small barn in the middle of nowhere.

If we're being honest, the past year hasn't always given us a lot to see beauty in. For many, the effects of the pandemic rage on; from hospitals to schools, folks are reaching the end of this year exhausted and burned out. In many stores supplies are becoming limited, and amidst larger global issues, thousands of refugees forced from their homes find themselves venturing to strange new shores. Many are mourning the loss of loved ones, and I'm heartbroken to hear stories of anxiety, confusion and depression amongst youth in the wake of coming to terms with the past 2 years.

Amongst all these struggles we've faced in the past year, the most heartbreaking to me in the increase of aggression and dissolution I see amidst neighbors. We seem to have seen an increase of collective rage and vitriol against others, not just on social media, but in our own daily circles. Disagreements are ending far more often in complete separation, rather than a willingness to understand one another and find common ground. In the process, we've seen friendships torn apart, communities split and holes left in beloved relationships.

This is the reason why I've been looking forward to Advent more this year than most. I'll be the first to admit some of the massive fanfare around the Christmas narrative can be a little over-the-top at times (I say that as someone who loves Christmas Sweaters & Hallmark films). But we can't deny it holds a truly magical quality that seems to always bring people together, no matter their differences. It's a rare time of year when everyone seems to highlight one key idea: *the beauty of life itself!*

This is an idea we are reminded of at the manger every year; I think it's a loving message from God that resonates throughout time. Scripture never hides the pain, divisions and brokenness of the world; in fact, it often highlights it. Rather than ignore or wipe away the errors of a broken creation, the Bible reveals how deep the scars run, and how much damage they have done. Reading through all of the brokenness, one might wonder why this broken life is even worth highlighting; if it's so broken, why not just ignore it, or do away with it?



However, that's not the answer we see in the manger; in fact, it's the opposite. Instead of turning away from this scarred creation, Jesus' entry into the world highlights just how beautiful life is. Rather than avoid a fallen world, God chooses to love it, so much so that He's willing to enter into it, and walk alongside a hurting creation. God's desire that first Noel was not to abandon life; but to heal it, and reveal how much He loved it.

This is all the more crazy when you consider what that first nativity scene was. The beauty isn't found in the highest temple in the land, nor with the most elegant group. Instead, it's amidst the dirt, the sounds of sleeping animals, and a host of random characters that Jesus enters into humanity. Foreign astrologers, a young unwed couple, shabbily dressed shepherds and a host of heavenly voices all adorn the scene, as the silent night whispers the goodness of God, and the beauty of life.

Genesis tells us that God's very own breath gives life to the dirt of the earth, creating a beautiful picture out of something so simplistic. Though our world is imperfect, and carries the scars of years of brokenness, Advent reminds us of the beauty spread across creation. And at the heart of Christmas, at the first Noel, God affirms the sacred beauty of life, and a longing to redeem its faults into a new creation. On the cross the ultimate scar against life, death itself, is conquered, and through resurrection God reveals His plan to restore the full beauty of His creation.

As we move into 2022, we face a host of uncertainties and questions. The path ahead won't be easy, and to be sure, there will be bumps, struggles and heartbreak along the way. Yet whatever we find ourselves facing, we can rest assured that however bleak life can get, this life is indeed still a beautiful one. For all our scars, this creation still sings the goodness of God, His never-ending grace, and His boundless love. We can be assured every Advent that God continues again and again to enter into this world, joyfully preparing the way for the restoration of this beautiful life.

I guess my prayer for this Advent is that it would remind us of the beauty, holiness, and wonder found across this life we live. From that beauty I pray we come to see the good in our neighbors, seek peace in the conflicts of our world, nurture the creation around us, and find much needed rest in our Father's loving arms. I pray we see reconciliation between enemies, the healing of broken families, and a continual reminder of the Holy Spirit's presence.

Wherever this season finds you WHLC, please know that the Love of God surrounds you at every moment. Through the trials and wonders of life, He promises His presence and goodness. I hope all of you are able to experience the beauty of this season not just this month, but the whole year round! May we all look upon the beauty of this season, and see just how much God's loves abounds in this wonderful creation!

*By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness...to guide our feet in the way of peace (Luke 1:80)*

A beautiful life indeed; Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas everyone!

Zach Meyer, Director of Youth and Family Ministry/Congregational Life Coordinator





Holidays in Our Homes

An Online Community Event

We had such an amazing response to our online nativity walk last year that we've decided to do something a little similar this year; albeit with a whole new spin! We invite you to join us as we explore Holidays in our Homes: a unique look at traditions, decorations & celebrations in our families homes, and the stories behind them!

Beginning with the first day of Advent, each day we'll share photos on Facebook from one of our families, showcasing any unique way they celebrate the holidays in their homes! This can take the form of anything from a special decoration, the photos of a long-held tradition in your family, to songs or readings you return to this time of year. With each photo(s) we'll share a description of what the tradition is & the story behind it.

To submit a contribution for this event, and to be featured for a day, is as simple as the nativity walk was last year. Simply email your photos, along with the story behind them, to Zach at zach@whlc.org. The order that we receive photos will be the order that we share them, and there'll be plenty of days for people to highlight their unique photos! All are welcome to share, so spread the word! We're excited to explore the wonderful and diverse traditions we have for this special time of year!



Student Christmas Program: The 12 Days of Christmas



The students are putting on a special Christmas event this year, and we invite everyone to come and check it out! On Sunday, December 19, at 9:45 a.m. in the sanctuary the students will share a special event exploring the idea of the 12 days of Christmas, through song, stories and scripture. We'll be recording the entire program to share online for those unable to attend in person!

We'll be practicing for this program every Wednesday leading up to the 19th, with a final rehearsal in Crabtree Parish Hall at 6:00 p.m. on December 15. All students are welcomed and encouraged to take part in the program. Contact Zach if you have any

questions or would like to help, and be sure to be here on the 19th to catch this wonderful performance by the students!



National Youth Gathering Meeting Thursday, December 2 6:30 p.m.

Our next Youth Gathering meeting will be on Thursday, December 2, at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room. We have a lot to discuss at the meeting, so we hope you can join us.

We currently have eight people registered for the gathering and there is still time to join our group. The Gathering is for all students currently in 8th-12th grade, and you are welcome to invite your friends to join our group as well! Even if you are just curious about the Gathering, we encourage you to come to the meeting to check it out.

Contact Zach if you have any questions about the Gathering or want information on how to join the group. You can also find more info on the website!



To RSVP for the event, simply contact Zach and let him know how many you're planning on bringing. For the white elephant gift exchange, we're asking everyone to bring a gift of something purchased for \$5.00 or less, wrapped up however you like! The gift can be anything at all; it can be treats, a decoration, holiday apparel or even a goofy toy. The only rules are they must be wrapped and have cost no more than \$5.00! If you cannot bring a gift no worries (just be sure to let us know); Zach will have several backup ones at the church. We want to make sure everyone parties in the exchange!

Baptisms

IN THE CHURCH FAMILY

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was celebrated on Saturday, November 27, for Elliott Driscoll Waymire, son of Josh & Becca Waymire, & grandson of Joel & Barb Waymire. Baptismal sponsors are Nick & Michelle Waymire. Welcome to our church family!



The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was celebrated on Sunday, November 28, for Rory Dean Yeager, son of Kendall & Laura Yeager, & grandson of Mitch & Donna Yeager. Baptismal sponsors are Kellen and Dami Yeager. Welcome to our church family!



Go INTO ALL the world...

BAPTIZING

...IN the NAME OF the FATHER,
AND OF the SON,
AND OF the HOLY SPIRIT.

Christmas Wish List for Luther Park

Due to the pandemic, our annual Advent Service with decorated tables will not occur for the second year. It has been a long tradition that the women of the church bring Christmas gifts for Luther Park.

December 4 & 5

Drop off your gifts and set them inside Crabtree Parish Hall on designated tables.

If the church is locked during the week but it is during business hours,
just buzz in and someone will let you inside.

If you prefer to stay in your car, we will be there to collect your gifts:

Saturday, December 4 from 1-3

Sunday, December 5 from 1-3

At this time you may also pickup your Advent devotion book and your 2022 offering envelopes.

The following are items that have requested. Please bring your gifts **UNWRAPPED**.

ENTERTAINMENT

Baby Dolls (soft, new)
Crayons/Washable Markers
Adult Coloring Books
Large Print Word Find Books
Fiction Books (for all ages)
Fidget Items

CLOTHING

Socks
Gripper Socks
Small Lap Blankets
Fidget Blankets

HYGIENE

Toothbrushes & Toothpaste
Hair Picks
Combs
Nail Polish
Hand Lotion
Body Lotion (men, women)
Body Wash (men, women)
Non-Aerosol Deodorant(men, women)
Hair Ties
Electric Shavers
Cologne/Perfume

OTHER

Necklaces/Jewelry
iTune Gift Cards
MP3/iPOD
Art Supplies
Headphones
Games
Stuffed Animals
Beads
Sensory Items
Packaged Snacks (cans of soda, crackers, chips, cookies)
Memory Games
Stationary
Sporting Items

Monetary donations will be accepted and appreciated.

Please make checks out to WHLC with Luther Park on the memo line.

Thank you for your generosity in continuing this mission to Luther Park,
Linda Anderson, Sharman Blake & Vivien Wells



Daisy Girl Scouts

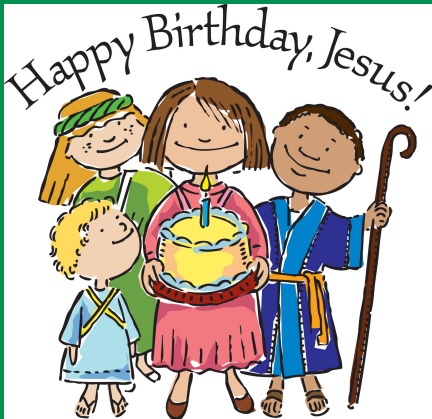
TROOP 1947

In 2018, the Daisy Girl Scout Troop began meeting on the 3rd floor at WHLC for their meetings. They took a break during COVID, but began meeting again at WHLC this fall. Please enjoy the message and picture from the them!

This summer and fall Girl Scout Troop 1947 has been working on their "Outdoor Journey". It is a series of badges focused on learning new skills that can be used camping or hiking. We also learned about animal habitats, and how our actions effect the ecosystems around us. Our Outdoor Journey was completed with a couple of service projects. We made 22 first aid kits that were donated to The Urbandale food pantry. We are also making blankets and toys, and donating food and litter to the Furry Friends Rescue. Thank you for letting us be a part of your church family.



Happy Birthday to You!



December BIRTHDAYS

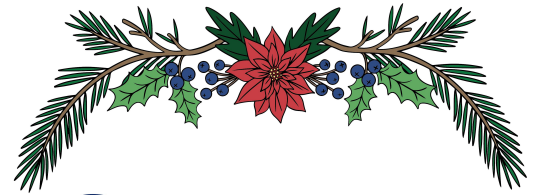
- 1 Sarah Willett
- 4 Cheryl Wheeler
- 6 Sheila Schneckloth
- 8 Brian Rye, Lila Tuttle, Vivien Wells
- 11 Tracey Hirst
- 12 Sue Devine
- 16 Tony Russell
- 18 LuAnn Reinders
- 19 Sonja Barrett, John Pederson
- 20 Adelaide Brennan, Janet Johnson,
Harper Seifert, Sandra Willett
- 21 Peg Gustafson
- 22 Bobbie Riddle
- 23 Zach Meyer, Kayla Hunefeld,
Hannah Toresdahl
- 26 Stephanie McNamara
- 28 Kelly Cox, Morry Hansen, Tara Klein
- 29 Emma Swanson
- 30 Kit Gilbert
- 31 Janice DuBois, Kent Thieman



THANK YOU!



Thank you to Dick and Joni for organizing and labeling the offering envelopes! Offering envelopes can be picked up during the drop off times for Luther Park or anytime in the narthex. Thank you for all you do, Dick and Joni!



Thank You!



A heartfelt "thank you!" for all the thoughts, prayers, phone calls, cards, visits and meals provided by our congregation over the last 6 weeks since my knee injury. WHLC is truly a special community and I am blessed every day by its warmth, caring and concern. While full recovery is still months away progress is being made. Just this week I've been able to start putting a bit of weight on my leg. I will find out in mid-December if the repair is strong enough to start physical therapy. With God's healing powers and your ever-present encouragement I look forward to the time when I'm able to worship with you in person. Thank you. ~Paul Rye

THANK YOU!



A big thank you to Lori Nicolet! She took all the tulip bulbs that were leftover from our Easter Garden last year and planted them along the east side of the building. If the squirrels don't get them we will have a beautiful tulip garden next spring. Thank you, Lori!

